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U.S. Serial No.: 10/574,414
Filed: March 22, 2007
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Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the claims as shown in the Listing Of Claims below. This Listing Of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS

Claim 1. (Currently Amended): A continuous belt casting apparatus, comprising a casting cavity, at least one flexible metal belt having an elongated casting surface passing through and at least partially defining the casting cavity, a motor for rotating said at least one metal belt in a longitudinal direction of said casting surface whereby said casting surface passes through said casting cavity in said longitudinal direction, and a molten metal supply device adapted to deliver molten metal continuously to the casting cavity, whereby molten metal supplied to the casting cavity is solidified and removed as a continuous strip ingot from said casting cavity by rotation of said at least one belt, wherein said casting surface is made of said metal and is provided with a plurality of grooves oriented in substantially the same direction, and wherein said plurality of grooves impart a surface roughness (Ra) to the casting surface, said surface roughness (Ra) being in the range of 18 to 80 micro-inches (0.46 to 2.0 micrometers).

Claim 2: Canceled.

Claim 3. (Previously Presented): The apparatus of claim 1,

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wherein the roughness (Ra) of the casting surface is in a range of 18 to 65 micro-inches (0.46 to 1.65 micrometers).

Claim 4. (Previously Presented): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the roughness (Ra) of the casting surface is in a range of 25 to 45 micro-inches (0.64 to 1.14 micrometers).

Claim 5. (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said at least one casting belt is made of copper or a copper alloy.

Claim 6. (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said at least one casting belt is made of aluminum or an aluminum alloy.

Claim 7. (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the casting belt is made of steel.

Claim 8. (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the grooves are oriented in a direction within 45 degrees of the longitudinal direction of the casting surface.

Claim 9. (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the grooves are oriented substantially in the longitudinal direction of the casting surface.

Claim 10. (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, being a twin belt caster provided with two belts.

Claim 11. (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, including a supply device adapted to supply an at least partially volatile

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liquid parting agent to said casting surface before said casting surface contacts molten metal in the casting cavity.

Claim 12. (Original): The apparatus of claim 10, further including a removal device adapted to remove said parting agent from said casting surface after said casting surface exits said casting cavity and separates from said continuous strip ingot.

Claim 13. (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, including means for applying coolant to the reverse side of said metal belt as it passes through the said casting cavity.

Claim 14. (Currently Amended): A method of casting metal to form a continuous strip ingot, which comprises forming a casting cavity by providing at least one flexible metal belt having an elongated casting surface with the casting surface passing through and at least partially defining the casting cavity, continuously supplying molten metal to the casting cavity and rotating the belt in a longitudinal direction of the casting surface to draw said molten metal through the casting cavity and to remove from the cavity a solidified strip ingot formed as said molten metal solidifies in the casting cavity, wherein said casting surface is made of said metal and is provided with a plurality of grooves oriented substantially in the same direction, and wherein said casting surface is provided with a plurality of grooves [[that]] impart a surface roughness (R_a) to the casting surface, said surface roughness (R_a) being in the range of 18 to 80 micro-

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inches (0.46 to 2.0 micrometers).

Claim 15: Canceled.

Claim 16. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 14, wherein the casting surface is provided with grooves that impart a surface roughness (Ra) to the casting surface in a range of 18 to 65 micro-inches (0.46 to 1.65 micrometers).

Claim 17. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 14 wherein the casting surface is provided with grooves that impart a surface roughness (Ra) to the casting surface in a range of 25 to 45 micro-inches (0.64 to 1.14 micrometers).

Claim 18. (Original): The method of claim 14, which comprises providing said at least one casting belt made of copper or a copper alloy.

Claim 19. (Original): The method of claim 14, which comprises providing said at least one casting belt made of aluminum or an aluminum alloy.

Claim 20. (Original): The method of claim 14, which comprises providing said at least one casting belt made of steel.

Claim 21. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 14, which comprises employing as said casting surface a surface on which said plurality of grooves is oriented in a direction within 45 degrees of the longitudinal direction of the casting surface.

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Claim 22. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 14, which comprises employing as said casting surface a surface on which said plurality of grooves is oriented substantially in the longitudinal direction of the casting surface.

Claim 23. (Original): The method of claim 14, which comprises providing two belts to define said casting cavity.

Claim 24. (Original): The method of claim 14, which comprises supplying molten aluminum or aluminum alloy to said casting cavity as said molten metal.

Claim 25. (Original): The method of claim 14, which further comprises supplying an at least partially volatile liquid parting agent to said casting surface before contacting said casting surface with said molten metal.

Claim 26. (Original): The method of claim 14, which further comprises removing said parting agent from said casting surface after said casting surface exits said casting cavity and separates from said continuous strip ingot.

Claim 27. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 14, which further comprises applying coolant to a reverse side of said belt as it passes through said casting cavity.

Claims 28 - 36: Canceled.